

entrust the care of the State." " I have proved them/' said Galerius. " Well, you must look to it," rejoins Diocletian, "you who are about to assume the reins of the Empire. I have toiled enough. While I ruled, I took care that the State stood safe. If any harm now befalls, the fault is not mine." \*

Such is a characteristic specimen of Lactantius's history, and so, when he comes to describe the ceremony of abdication, he makes Galerius draw Maximin Daza to the front of the group of imperial officials by whom Diocletian is surrounded, and re-presents the soldiers as staring in surprise at their new Caesar, as at one whom they had never seen before. Yet a favourite nephew of Galerius can scarcely have been a stranger to the troops of Nicomedia. Galerius not only—according to Lactantius—drew forward Maximin Daza, but at the same time rudely thrust back into the throng the son of Constantius, the senior of the two new Augusti. This was young Constantino, the future Emperor, who for some years past had been living at the Court of Diocletian.

But it was no broken down Emperor in his dotage, passing, according to the spasms of his malady, from sanity to insanity, who resigned the throne on the plain of Nicomedia. Diocletian was but fifty-nine years of age. He had just recovered, it is true, from a very severe illness, which, even on the testimony of Lactantius, had caused " grief in the palace, sadness and tears among his guards, and

\* Lactant., *De Mori. Persec.*, c. 18.